

## Department of Veterans Affairs

Regional  
Office of Public Affairs

245 W. Houston St.  
New York, NY 10014  
(212) 807-3429

## Media Advisory

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**CONTACT: Steven Lieberman, M.D.**  
**857-203-6011 (office)**

### **Boston VA Targets Diabetes, Obesity among American Veterans**

BOSTON – The U.S. Departments of Veterans Affairs (VA) and Health and Human Services (HHS) are launching a new national campaign to combat diabetes and obesity through a program called “HealthierUS Veterans.” A local kickoff event will be held on Friday, May 19, 2006, at the West Roxbury Campus of the VA Boston Healthcare System, located at 1400 VFW Parkway. The program begins at 11:00 a.m. on the campus’s front lawn.

HealthierUS Veterans serves as the foundation for several programs designed to improve the nation’s health. One of those programs to be featured during the Boston event is called MOVE – Managing Obesity/Overweight for Veterans Everywhere. MOVE coordinators at the VA Boston Healthcare System, enroll, screen and provide risk counseling to all overweight veteran patients.

Patients enrolled in VA's health care program can complete an interactive on-line questionnaire about their health status, nutrition and exercise. Based on their information, veterans and family members receive a custom report with health information and instructions for follow up with the staff at the medical center.

The Boston event is the second of four regional educational campaigns for HealthierUS Veterans planned by the two federal departments.

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*Commemorating 75 Years of Service*

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“To help raise awareness among our local veterans and their families, the event here will feature a variety of exhibits promoting healthy living, eating and fitness,” said Michael Lawson, director of the VA Boston Healthcare System. Local celebrities, members of veterans service organizations and employees will participate.

“We’re going to be *walking the walk and talking the talk*,” added Lawson. “A program highlight will be a fitness walk around the West Roxbury campus led by members of the Boston College Women’s Basketball team.”

VA health officials want local veterans to combat these two health problems, which disproportionately affect the department’s health care system by virtue of the fact that a large percentage of veterans served by VA are elderly Americans.

According to the American Diabetes Association, 7 percent of the U.S. population has diabetes, and the rate increases with age. Among veterans receiving VA health care, who are on average older than the general population, the rate is 20 percent.

HealthierUS Veterans is a joint initiative by VA and HHS to improve the health of the nation by increasing healthy eating and physical activity among veterans, their families and communities, and slowing the increase in obesity and diabetes.

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For more information on HealthierUS Veterans, visit the web at  
[www.healthierusveterans.va.gov](http://www.healthierusveterans.va.gov)



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